

# Peer Review Team Report

## **SOCIAL SCIENCES/FACE**

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The peer team would like to thank the Social Sciences/FACE Division staff for their effort in completing the self-study document. This was a golden opportunity for the division faculty to evaluate the direction in which they were headed not only as an entire division but also on a discipline basis. In addition, students were able to evaluate the various departments in the division with two of the departments (Administration of Justice and FACE) being rated as doing a great job of meeting student needs whereas all of the other departments were considered to be doing a good job of meeting students needs. The one exception for student data was for the Anthropology department—no data was obtained.

Upon reading the Social Sciences self-study document, the peer team determined specific areas for further investigation. The goal of the peer team review was to examine the self-study, interview faculty members, and to write an analytical report confirming what the program is and what the program could be.

The first area of investigation was to determine if the faculty of the Social Sciences division read their self-study and what their opinions were of the self-study. Some disciplines clearly care more about the self-study report and process than others given their responses to this area of investigation and their depth or lack of depth with their responses in the report itself. One full-time faculty member even elected not to participate at all in the self-study and "Half facetiously...claimed that the information from the 1998 report still obtains".

## Curriculum

In political science, the number of course offerings is growing. Brand new courses have been added in Administration of Justice (AJ). The new police academy on campus commencing in the fall of 2006 will broadly open avenues for these prospective police and sheriff officers and facilitate prestige to our campus. More sections of classes are needed in several disciplines including psychology.

The general consensus is that the number of courses offered in the different disciplines is limited given the lack of full-time faculty in the division. Student surveys reflect that more classes need to be offered. Not enough sections of particular courses being offered has led to too numerous crashers in many classes. However, the lack of a research administrator at AVC has prevented the obtaining of statistical proof that such a shortage exists. There are exceptions as in AJ more daytime sections of courses are now being offered with the hiring of a second full-time instructor. As time goes by, more and more classes in the division are being offered online—this expands access for courses for students

who may not be able to take certain classes otherwise. Expanded use of technology in the classroom will facilitate the effectiveness of the curriculum itself.

There are plans in the disciplines for either initiating or expanding online course offerings. However, there is fear that attrition rates will actually escalate with the heightened use of online courses.

## **Student Outcomes**

Many course outlines of record have been updated to identify the expected student learning outcomes. One discipline, Psychology, already has excellent plans in place to address both program-level and course-level student learning outcomes. Some Social Science division faculty members are already using myAVC to facilitate student learning outcomes. Online and hybrid (combination of traditional and online) courses will be incorporating Blackboard which will help students to succeed. One faculty member interviewed suggested using pre and post tests to better assess student progress towards achievement of the course outcomes. AJ is bringing back the Work Experience program which will help students to later obtain full-time positions in law enforcement.

Follow-up of student success, for example, with transfer students has been haphazard at best. Some students do report to us after they have transferred, for instance, to UCLA or Cal State Northridge reporting their progress in upper division studies. The lack of a formal research person at AVC has hampered efforts in tracking students past their AVC studies—this includes tracking those who go on to discipline-related full-time employment upon completion of course work at AVC.

## **Personnel & Support Services**

During the period of this program self-study, Social Sciences only had one full-time Administrative Assistant. This concern has been recently addressed with the recent hiring of a full-time clerical person who works jointly with the Business and Computer Studies division. Faculty indicated in their interviews that students are encouraged to use the Writing Center if they are poor writers and that the reading skills of many students also need to be enhanced. These instructors also stated that more and more students need to take advantage of supplemental instruction and the Learning Center. The early alert program in conjunction with Dorothy Williams has been utilized by faculty. Some of the faculty take their students to the library to assist them with their research assignments. Accommodations are made for students with disabilities to take exams at the D.S.S. office. On a downside, in at least some of the disciplines the faculty expressed the need for more tutors and that it is difficult to

find tutors with sufficient experience. Those interviewed indicated that students taking transfer classes are encouraged to visit the Transfer Center in order ensure that their classes articulate. Instructors appear to make effective use of the IMC as needed.

## **Facilities**

There is definitely a lack of SMART classrooms. Faculty have to check out equipment from IMC and drag it around to their classrooms over uneven sidewalks throughout the campus. Division-owned equipment is reported to be broken or missing, with even the division copy machine unavailable for weeks at a time. Climate control has been expressed as a problem in some of the classrooms. The student surveys indicate that more lecture, lab, computer and internet facilities are needed. Adjunct faculty have no offices at all—they end up using the division lounge (with nowhere else to go). Unfortunately, renovation and/or expansion of facilities are far down the list with respect to the AVC Facilities Master Plan.

## **Fiscal Support**

It appears that the Social Sciences/FACE division cannot grow and effectively perform their mission duties without adequate funding. Regarding the supply budget, some instructors use their own pens, markers, and pads due to limited funding. Funding needs to be provided so that adjunct faculty have an office where they could meet students.

## **Community Outreach**

One political science professor reported that he plans to host a one-day conference for high school students to come to campus in our hopes of attracting would-be political science majors. The political science work experience program has placed students in various legislative and judicial system offices.

History professors actively participate in High School orientations.

The vocational programs in the division have active advisory committees which meet at least once each year.

## **State and Federal Compliance**

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AJ is in compliance with all California P.O.S.T. standards—the new P.O.S.T. academy on the AVC campus will facilitate the maintaining of federal and state regulations.

## **Recommendations for the Social Sciences division**

*Seek to hire more full-time instructors in most disciplines as requested as ongoing funding permits in order to bring the full-time to part-time ratio more into compliance. Specifically, the division addressed the need to hire two more full-time AJ instructors.*

*Especially as specifically addressed by one of the disciplines, seek to always hire competent adjunct faculty to fill positions as needed in the division.*

*Seek for improvements in technology-driven instruction in the classroom. This involves SMART classrooms and other means to deliver PowerPoint slides and other computer-generated instruction such as the Internet. Effectively using multiple delivery modalities will facilitate student learning.*

*At some point in the future, a new dedicated building for the Social Science/FACE division will facilitate student success and better serve the needs of faculty and staff. In the short run, at least one space is needed for adjunct faculty in order for them to meet with their students out of the classroom.*

*Faculty can facilitate student success by encouraging students to take advantage when supplemental instruction is offered and to make more use of the Learning Center.*

*Change the course numbering for Macro and Microeconomics to the 200-series in order to reflect the position that these are sophomore-level courses. This change should take place only if these economics courses are designated as sophomore courses at transferable universities.*

*New faculty, both full and part time, need to be oriented to the proper use of the course outline of record in developing their syllabuses.*

*Ensure that all current offerings have their Course Outlines of Record updated absolutely no later than the spring semester, 2008 as per the Vice President of Academic Affairs timetable.*

*Continue the expansion of online course offerings.*

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*Vocational programs within the division should continue to meet with their respective advisory committees on at least an annual basis.*

*Whether or not a common exam or exams should be given for all of the sections of a particular course in order to "validate" that students achieve the desired student "course-level" learning outcomes should be addressed.*

*Make appropriate use of the new AVC research administrator to follow-up on students who receive an Associate degree in Letters, Arts & Sciences and/or transfer to four-year universities to determine the "true" long-term effect of student learning outcomes.*

*Increase involvement in outreach programs such as the High School Orientation Day, Annual Open House, and the Rock n Enroll.*

*Very little comment was made in the self-study report concerning the Work Experience Education Program. Perhaps AVC needs to address the feasibility of placing the Work Experience Program in another division.*

*This is a philosophical recommendation. Given the inconsistent level of responses in the self-study report among the various departments, this is one indicator which suggests that the entire division needs to be a more cohesive unit.*